



September 2002

'Gatekeepers' provide care and feeding of entry controllers

by Lenell Kern and Barbara Hager, AFRL Materials and Manufacturing Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — Every day, base employees interact with the cadre of gate guards checking our passes and providing a line of necessary defense for the installation. Their responsibility provides little in terms of comfort and luxury. It's a vital and often thankless job. Those who do it could use a little more recognition.

Most of the guards' shifts are 12 hours. When troops from Air Force Research Laboratory's Materials and Manufacturing Directorate periodically began to man the gates, we were given a chance to show our appreciation for our own troops and the guards who do this daily.

Most of us recognized the guards on our way in to work and smiled and thanked them for being there. Some of us even dropped off treats or goodies to offer thanks. But we wanted to do more.

When asked about the Spartan conditions at the gate, a guard replied, "It's no problem ma'am, look at our troops in Afghanistan."

Many of our guards have this selfless attitude, and deserve recognition, so we developed the Gatekeepers, an organization representing the Materials and Manufacturing Directorate, to show appreciation for those working the gates daily.

Our organization is committed to making sure they know we appreciate them throughout the year. Every other Wednesday, since April 17, we acknowledge them for keeping us safe and secure in Area B.

Our appreciation comes in packages consisting of donuts, fresh fruit, snack items, cereal bars, bottled water and assorted juices. On extremely hot days, we have made emergency water and ice cream runs. Once a month we take them fresh, home-baked items.

The surprise on their faces — and their appreciation are wonderful and completely fulfilling, similar to the feeling we all have during the holiday season.

As the adage goes, charity begins at home and so should our thanks to the men and women who guard our gates — who give



Senior Airman Richard Lewis, 88th Security Forces Squadron, C Flight, checks identification during an early rush at Gate 22B. (Air Force photo)

their best to keep us secure. The people of AFRL's ML Directorate appreciate this and are committed to showing our appreciation throughout the year — come rain, snow, heat or cold. @